

A
RELATION
OF THE
Famous Conference
HELD ABOUT
RELIGION
AT
PARIS,

BETWEEN
M. Bossuet, Bishop of Condom
(late Tutor to the *Dauphin*)

AND
Monsieur Claude,
Minister of the Reformed Church at *Charenton*;

AT
The Countess of *Royes* house, in the Presence of several
Persons of the first Quality, at the Request of *Mademoiselle de Duras*,
Daughter to the Famous Marshal *de Turenne*, she being then upon
Changing her Religion.

*Translated from the French Copy, as it was lately Pub-
lished by Monsieur Claude.*

L O N D O N,
Printed by *H. C.* for *Thomas Malthus*, at the *Sun*
in the *Poultry*, 1684.

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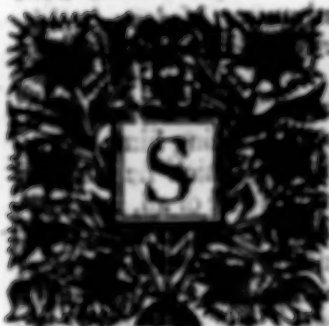
AT
The Countess of Noisy's house in the Presence of several
Persons of the first Quality, as the Bishop of Meaux, the Bishop of Paris,
Bishop of the French, Bishop of the French, the Bishop then upon
Chancellor of the University.

Translated from the French Copy as it was lately Pub-
lished by Monsieur Claude.

L O N D O N
Printed by H. C. for Thomas Aldrich, at the Sun
in the Strand, 1684.

A TRUE AND EXACT
ACCOUNT
 OF THE FAMOUS
CONFERENCE
 BETWEEN THE
Bishop of Condom,
 AND
Monſieur CLAUDE.

An Account of what paſſed in the Converſation which the Biſhop of Condom the Dauphins Tutor, had with Monſieur Claude, at the Counteſs of Royſes houſe, in the preſence of Mademoiſelle Marchalle de Lorge, the Counteſs de Roys, Mademoiſelle de Duras, the Marquiſs de Miremont, Mademoiſelle de Roucy, and Monſieur Cotton.



One dayes before this Converſation Mademoiſelle de Duras went to ſee Monſieur Claude, whom ſhe told ſhe had ſome Scruples about Religion; and took out of her pocket a Paper, which had been given her, containing ſome paſſages of S. Auguſtin, touching the Eucharie; to which M. Claude made anſwer, and then fell to ſhewing her by other paſſages, that the Doctrine of that Father upon this Subject was the ſame with what was taught at Charenton, and herewith ſhe ſeemed ſatisfied.

On the morrow Monſieur Claude chancing to ſee her at the Counteſs of Royſes houſe, after a pretty long Diſcourſe, ſhe told him, ſhe could wiſh he would have in her preſence a Conference with ſome Roman Catholick Doctour or other. M. Claude made anſwer, That this was in no wiſe practiſed, that ſuch Conferences might have Dangerous conſequences, and that ſhe knew very well that the State of thoſe of the Reformed Religion in France, and in particular at Paris, obliged 'em to uſe many meaſures of Prudence and of Pre-caution: But ſaid ſhe, *What courſe would you take if by Chance you met with any of theſe Gentlemen, and that you were aſſed upon Points of Religion, ſure you'd not abandon your Caſe?* In ſuch

a case, said M. *Claude*, I would avoid entering into Dispute as much as possible I could, but being forced to it I would give a Reason of my Faith, and in these unforeseen Occasions, people are not us'd to flinch and run away. But why added he, d'ye ask me this Question? That's not the matter in Dispute.

Two Days afterwards, the Countess of *Roye* told M. *Claude*, how her endeavours were us'd to have him, as if it were by Chance, with M. de *Condom*, and how she had thought it fitting to give him notice of that Design. If I were to meet said he, with any one, I should rather choose it should be with M. de *Condom* than any other, Because he is a Wise, Honourable and Understanding Man, and for whom I have a great Esteem and Consideration; but being as I am a Publique Person, methinks this business does belong to be well thought on and weigh'd. So by and by he gave an account of this business to two of his Friends, and the next day they went to visit a Person of Quality of an extraordinary Merit and consummate Prudence, with whom it was concluded, that this Rencontre with M. de *Condom* was absolutely to be avoided. The Reasons were, that People already knew *Mademoiselle de Duras* was wholly disposed to Change her Religion, that according to all appearances, she only demanded a Conference to do it with the more Solemnity, and to make use of it as a Pretext, and that what success so ever it might have, it would not hinder her from Changing, or from saying she had not been satisfied; and that the *Gazette* also would not fail to make it an Article. The Person of Quality, who was consulted, took upon him to visit the Countess of *Roye*, and make her relish these Reasons. And she relish'd 'em indeed and easily comprehended their Strength. But notwithstanding all she could do, it lay not in her power to dissuade *Mademoiselle de Duras* from her self-determination. This Lady complained highly of being abandoned, saying this was even what she had often been reproach'd with, that the *Ministers* dare not appear before the *Catholic* Doctors. To which she added Tears, to touch the Countess her Sister, by all manner of means, proceeding even to protest, that if People did but know what Good this would do her, they would certainly have this Charity for her.

This oblig'd the Countess of *Roye* to endeavour the bringing about the Interview of M. de *Condom*, with M. *Claude*, and she did it to that purpose that M. *Claude* found himself as it were forced to grant it her, that so he might not be exposed to the insults of those of the contrary Religion. She assured how M. de *Condom* had told her, that he wished this Interview might be by form of Rencontre, that it might not be published in the world, and that there might be no affecting to speak of it on either side.

Tuesday the first of *March*, about two a Clock in the afternoon, M. *Claude* went alone to the Countess of *Roye*'s house, whither came presently after *Madame la Marquise de Lorge*, *Mademoiselle de Duras*, M. le *Marquis de Marmon*, and M. *Cotton*. About a quarter of an hour after M. de *Condom* came alone.

The first Civilities being over, and all the Company seated, M. de *Condom* addressing his speech to M. *Claude*, told him, That he had been desirous of seeing him, to propose to him some things of the practice of those of his Religion, which he thought entirely contrary to their Principles. That those things consisted first of all, in an Article of their Discipline, which orders, That in case, there arises any Contention touching the Doctrine, the Question shall be decided in the Consistory, by the Word of God, and that in case, they do not acquiesce, it shall be removed to the Provincial Synod, and from thence to the National Synod, where the entire and final Resolution shall be made by the Word of God, and so which those who shall refuse to acquiesce shall be Excommunicated. That in the second place, he produces a Formulary of Letter-Missive to the National Synods, drawn up in the Synod of *Pierre*, for to be thence forward followed in the Provinces, by which People promise to Submit themselves to all that shall be resolved on in that Holy Assembly, so be obedient thereunto, and to execute it from point to point, being persuaded, says the Formulary, That God will provide therein, and conduct you by his Holy Spirit, in all Truth and Equity, by the Rule of his Word. That besides this he produced an Act of the National Synod of *Charenton*,

ron, held in 1644. wherein is condemned the Opinion of the *Independants*, who will not allow that particular Churches depend on Colloquies and Synods; but that every one may govern it self, by its own laws. Now that *All* does expressly mention, that this Sect opens a door to all manner of Irregularities and Extravagancies, that it takes away all manner of applying a Remedy; and that if it were suffered, there might arise as many Religions as Parishes. In short, he produced an *All* of the National Synod of *Sainte Foy*, by which upon some overtures of Re-union with those of the Confession of *Augsbourg*, the Synod names Deputies to go and Confer with them; to whom was given full power of granting and concluding all the points that should be brought into deliberation, whether concerning Doctrine, or any other thing, concerning the good and repose of all the Churches, proceeding so far as to insert their results in the Confession of the Faith. The Conclusion he drew from all this was, That those of the Religion of *M. Claude*, did themselves acknowledge that to preserve the Unity of the Church, it was Necessary to submit ones Judgment, and to render an Entire and absolute Obedience to Ecclesiastical Assemblies, without taking the freedom to Examine their decisions, or Judge whether they were squared according to the Word of God, or not; and that in case of disobedience Excommunication was Just. That it was precisely what the Church of *Rome* pretended, that it required nothing more. But that nevertheless when we have to do with her, we establish a quite contrary Principle. That he desired *M. Claude* to answer him distinctly to all this, and how he would listen peaceably to all he should say to him. That as to the rest, *M. Claude* ought to be so much the more ready to answer him in that there was nothing new in all this, and that the same *All* and the same consequences, which he drew, were found in the Exposition of the Catholick Doctrine.

M. Claude immediately made answer, that tho he came not thither with any design to have a Regular Conference, yet nevertheless he was glad that this Occasion furnish'd him with the means of Testifying to *M. de Condom* the Esteem he had for his Person, & that not having any particular merit of his own, it was a great honour to him, to have such a Prelate as *M. de Condom* to pick him out to measure himself with him. That he would endeavour to satisfy him upon all the points he had newly proposed to him, and that if in the sequel of the Discourse, any Expression should start from him, which might personally shock *M. de Condom*, he protested from that moment it should be contrary to his intention.

M. de Condom Replyed to this very handsome and very obliging things, and *M. Claude* renewing the Discourse, told him, That in general, all he had newly alledged, concluded nothing less than blind and absolute submission, which the Church of *Rome* pretended was owing to the decisions of Ecclesiastical Assemblies. That a Distinction ought to be made of two sorts of Authorities, the one Sovereign and Unlimited, to which one ought to pay a full and Entire Obedience, the other depending and Limited, which ought not to be obey'd, but under certain Conditions. That *M. de Condom* knew very well the Protestants did not attribute this first, but to God alone speaking in his holy Scriptures, and that for the other, they gave it to the Pastors of the Church, Whether that they are considered each apart, or were assembled in Synod or in Council. That their Authority which is only Ministerial, is Limited in two manners, whereof the one is, That they ought to make their decisions, not of themselves, as they think fitting, but according to the Word of God. The other that they leave still to Persons which are submitted to them the Right of Examining the Decisions, to know if they are indeed Conformable to the Word of God: From whence it follows, That the Obedience which is owing them is Ever suspendedly on this condition, That they have not deviated from the Word of God, That the Authority of the Pastors & of their Assemblies, cannot be greater than that of the Parliaments in *France*, which have not the Power to change the ancient Laws, nor of making new, and to whom, if it should happen, that they should order or exact things contrary to the Kings

Service, and the fidelity that is owing him, People would both have a Right, and be under an Obligation of disobeying. That the Authority of Ecclesiastical Assemblies could not be greater than that of Fathers over Children, since both God and nature have invested Parents therewith, that Parents have a right of acting in the name of their Children; since they have the right of their education, the right of commanding them, and the Scripture in a thousand places recommends to Children Docility and Obedience towards their Parents, but this does not hinder Children from having a right, or from being under an obligation of examining if what their Parents teach 'em, and what they command 'em be true or false, just or unjust. How that nevertheless it did not follow from thence but that the Authority of Pastors and their assemblies was very great, as it did not follow but that of Parliaments, and that of parents, was likewise so, tho' they were limited authorities; that the Pastors were as public keepers of the Word of God, established for the studying it and meditating it incessantly in order to the drawing from thence truths necessary for the instruction of the People, and for the abridging private persons of a trouble, to which they cannot entirely apply themselves, by reason of the distractions of Civil Affairs; that when the Pastors acquitted themselves well of this duty, the people were obliged to receive their word with submission and obedience, but when they deviated from it, they were to look upon them as prevaricators.

Then descending particularly to the acts alledged by M. de Condom, he said that 'twas upon this principle, and with these limitations, that we ought to understand the Clause of submission contained in the letter-missives to national synods, since it was only founded upon this supposition, that all will pass therein according to the *Word of God*, for these terms, *Being as we are persuaded that God will preside therein and conduct you by his Holy Spirit in all truth, by the rule of his Word*, signify a persuasion of Charity and Equity, because it is ever to be well presumed of assemblies and hope that God will preside therein, and that they will doe their duty untill the contrary appears. But that this did not carry so absolute a submission, as to deprive people of the right of examining what shall be resolved therein: As concerning the Act which condemneth the *Independents*, it is, (said he) the highest justice. For tho' the assemblies are not infallible, nevertheless they ought not to be abolished? 'Tis in truth an humane order, but however an order which God himself has established for the conservation of his Church, and from which one cannot depart without a crime. Nevertheless it does not follow from thence that a blind obedience is to be paid to the decisions of the assemblies, nor that it was the sense of the Synod of *Charleston*. As for the deputation which the synod of *Sainte Foy* made of four persons to go & confer with those of the confession of *Angsbourg*, and to whom it gave a full power, you cannot draw from thence, said he, any advantage. For it was with those Deputies as with Ambassadors which the King sends with full power to propose, treat and conclude as Plenipotentiaries which are sent to negotiate the Peace. How full soever their power be, and tho' they are called Plenipotentiaries, the condition is always naturally understood, that they shall do nothing contrary to the true interest of their Authorizers, to whom what they do must necessarily revert for to be approv'd and ratified without which nothing would be done, that they ought to be understood that full power given by the Synod to its Deputies, for the hearing of those of the confession of *Angsbourg*, for the receiving their propositions, their complaints, their overtures, to make the like to them reciprocally, to receive from them illustrations, and return the like, nay and to agree with them if possible, but not to be the absolute Masters of the Faith, nor to receive blindly all they should have concluded; For in such sort of things the cause of recourse to the Authorizers, and the necessity of ratification is naturally understood. To which M. Claude added this consideration, that if the point in question was the true sense of an act of the *Roman Church*, of a Canon, for example, of the Council of *Trent*,

M. *de Condom* would doubtless find it more just, to receive it from him than from M. *Claude*, because the thing in dispute was the sense of a Church whereof M. *de Condom* is a member, and that in all probability he ought to understand it better than a man that is not so. I expect then from you, My Lord Bishop, said he, the same equity, which if you'd receive from me the sense of the Acts in dispute, at least unless the sense I give 'em be contrary, to that of the Doctors of my communion, or evidently illusory, or contrary to our other principles, but if the sense I give of those acts has nothing of that, methinks you have no right to reflect it, nor to fancy to your self any other.

M. *de Condom* renewing the Discourse said, that he would begin where M. *Claude* had ended, because that he had said in the last place, seem'd to have some justice and truth at first, tho' it had nothing at all of solidity. That what M. *Claude* said would be true, if the point in issue was no more than explaining their rights and the manner of administering the Word, and the Sacraments, in that he should think him better informed, and that he did not at all intend to hinder him from explaining it as he pleas'd, the sense of those who had set up their discipline and made the acts he urg'd: That he knew they deny'd that they ought to submit themselves without examination, to the judgment of the Church. But that he pretended this absolute submission was so necessary that those very people who deny'd it in speculation, could not forbear establishing it in practice, that thus they were fallen into a contradiction, and that 'twas what he pretended to prove, and wherein he was not obliged to believe M. *Claude*. For if the thing in dispute was to show any contradiction in the sentiments of the *Catholic* Church, he would not urge for authority it's explication, nor hinder M. *Claude* from drawing from the terms of the Councils such conclusions as he thought fitting.

M. *de Condom* making then pause, M. *Claude* reply'd, that since 'twas certain that those who had made the acts in dispute, deny'd that people should submit themselves without examination to the judgment of Ecclesiastical assemblies; he had at least this advantage, that by M. *de Condom*'s own confession, the explication he gave to those acts was conformable to the principles of the Protestants who had made them, and that it was much more reasonable to receive it, than to fancy to one's self a sense which entangled 'em in a contradiction, that if the thing in dispute was any act of the Church of *Rome*, he would make no difficulty to receive the sense which M. *de Condom* should give thereof, conformable to the principles of that Church, unless the very words of the act should oppose it, in which case he might induce the contradiction, and if M. *de Condom* was upon those terms in regard of the acts alledged, it would be easy to see upon what terms he established that pretended contradiction.

M. *de Condom* said how that was no difficult matter to make out: That he made it consist in regard of the discipline, in that on the one side it required that the decision of the Doctrine should be made in the consistory by the *Word of God*, that it also understood that it was performed in the provincial Synod by the *Word of God*, as well as in the national, and that on the other it requir'd that if they did not acquiesce to the decision of the consistory, or to that of the provincial Synod, things should remain in the same state until the national Synod, where it layes, *shall be performed the entire and ultimate Resolution by the Word of God, to which if they do not acquiesce they shall be retrrenched from the Church.* Which clearly shew'd that the acquiescing which was required for the decision of the national was founded not upon the *Word of God* precisely as such, for the decision of the Consistory and that of the synod of the province had been also made by the *Word of God* precisely as such, and nevertheless the appeal was allowed of. But that it was founded upon the *Word of God*, in as much as explained and interpreted by the last judgment of the Church, that is to say, upon its being the

the last and final resolution, and by consequence upon the authority of the assembly considered in it self: Now this is, said he, a manifest contradiction to the principle which denies the absolute submission to the judgment of the Church, that this was confirmed by the discipline which did not order any Excommunication against those who do not acquiesce in the decisions of the consistory, and of the provincial Synod, and yet ordained against those who refuse to obey those of the National.

○ The same thing, said he, appears by that letter-missive to the national Synod. For how can we promise and swear we will submit to all that shall be resolved therein, without supposing we owe to the Church an entire and absolute submission? Say that we submit thereunto upon the persuasion we have that God will preside therein by his Spirit and his Word, and upon this swear, that is to say, that upon this persuasion is founded on, an express promise that God will conduct, the last judgment of his Church, by his Holy Spirit after an infallible manner. Nay and this, said he, appears in the act of the national Synod of Charenton, against the Independants, for the reason then and there alledged, That if their principle was suffered, there might be as many Religions as Parishes, concluded for the absolute Obedience to the decisions of the Synods, since if it was allow'd to particulars to examine the ultimate decisions, not only then might be as many Religions as Parishes, but as many Religions as Persons, and that by consequence there would be no way to preserve the Unity of the Faith, or the Unity of the Church.

As for what concerns the Deputies which the synod of *Sainte fey* nominated to go and confer with those of the confession of *Augsburg*, he said he did faithfully acknowledge that how full power soever the synod might have given them, the intention however of the Synod was not that it should depend of them to overturn all, or to put, if he durst make use of that expression, the Cellar in the Garret and the Garret in the Cellar, that he really beleived that the synod meant, that what they effected should return to them, and that in such sort of things a Ratification is always necessary. But that it was a very amazing thing, and to which M. *Claude* had not made any answer, that this synod had offered to insert in the Confession of the Faith what the Deputies concluded with the *Lutherans*. For this is making a doubt of the confession of their faith, of which we were however told that it contain'd nought else than the pure *Word of God*, wherein nothing was to be changed. D'ye think, said he, one can change the articles of your confession of Faith.

M. *de Condom* having ceased speaking, M. *Claude* said that he would answer to all the points of that discourse, and desired him to afford him a peaceable audience. Whereunto in the first place he said, that M. *de Condom* does misapprehend the Article of the Disciplines which bears that in case they do not acquiesce in the decision of the consistory, nor in that of the provincial synod, *things shall remain in the same state until the National, where shall be taken the last and final resolution from the Word of God, to which those who shall not acquiesce shall be retrenched from the Church*. For it is not said, if either that the Decisions of the consistory, and of the provincial synod ought not to be made by the *Word of God*, in like manner with those of the National, or that this Word has not an equal authority, whether that it be declared, either by the consistory, or by the synod of the Province, or by the national synod, or that it be precisely to it alone, in as much as such that we owe an entire obedience. But this order, added he, was established for two reasons, very different from that which you have pretended, the one is that there is appearance, that the examination of the *Word of God*, upon the point of question shall be made in the consistory with less exactness, and light, than in a synod composed of all the Ministers of a province, nay and with less light and exactness in a provincial then in a national synod, which is commonly found to be composed of all the most sagacious and most able persons in a Kingdom.

dom. The other Reason is, That People may have prepossessions against a Consistory, which shall hinder 'em from listening to it with all due docility; whereas it will not be so in regard of a Provincial Synod, which will be look'd upon as less interess'd, and more empty of Passions and personal Prepossessions, and by Consequence they will hearken to it more peaceably. In short, those sort of Personal Passions and Interests having still much less room in a National Synod, compos'd of Persons far distant, who assemble from all parts of the Kingdom, in all probability People will not entertain any prejudice against them, and by consequence will receive the Word of God from their mouth with more docility, and listen to 'em in a better disposition. He said then that this order had been taken for the avoiding as much as possible, two inconveniencies; the one, That the final Decision might not be made lightly, inconsiderately, out of passion, and a humane Interest: The other, That the prepossessions against the persons might not be an *Obstacle* in the Parties to give Ear to, and receive the Word of God with Obedience and Submission of Faith, which is owing it. But that from thence it could not be concluded, that in the sense of the Discipline, it was not alwayes according to the Word of God, in as much as such, and not to the authority of the *Assembly*, that the Obedience ought to be rendred. That as to the Rest, the Decision of the National was call'd Ultimate and Final, because that in the humane Order, and in the present state of things there was no going further.

As for the Letter-missive to the National Synods, he made answer, That it did no more Conclude the absolute Submission, than the Act of the Discipline, since that the Condition of Judging according to the Word of God, was therein expressed by these Terms, *Being persuaded as we are, that God will Preside therein, by his Spirit, and his Word.*

As to the reason alledged by the Synod of *Charenton* against the Independants, he said, That it did not suppose a blind Obedience. That the Dependence which particular Churches have of Coloquies and Synods, is an Exterieur Order, which tho' it does not contain an Exterieur and infallible Means, to preserve the Church in the Unity of the Faith, does not fail nevertheless to be of very great use for that very purpose, and that it is ever to be presumed that the Blessing of God will accompany it, since it is an Order which he himself has Established. That the Independants, who reject this Order, deprive themselves of this means, and expose themselves willingly to that inconvenience, of having as many Religions as Parishes, insomuch that the Synod had reason to make them this Reproach. That there is no saying of the same thing of the Principle of the Protestants, which by rejecting the Blind Obedience, and absolute Submission, does nevertheless preserve the outward means useful and proper for the maintaining the Unity of the Faith. And as to what M. de Condom has said, That without the absolute Obedience, there might happen to be as many Religions as Parishes, he owns it might so happen humanly speaking, notwithstanding the practice of the order, and Ecclesiastical *Assemblies*, for humane Wit is of it self subject to an infinite number of Errors. But that this cannot happen if a regard be had to God, who Blessing the outward order, and communicating to his truly Faithful and Elect, one and the same Spirit, maintains them by that means certain and infallible, in the Unity of one and the same Faith, and by consequence in that of one and the same Church. That the Faith being a thing not humane but Divine, there is but one God alone, who can produce it, or who can preserve it in the hearts of men. And this is also what he infallibly does in the hearts of his Elect, by his Spirit, and by the outward means of the Ministry, which he himself has established, *for Paul plants, and Apollo waters, but God only gives the Increase.*

Then he proceeded to the Deputies which the Synod of *Sainte Foy* nominated to go to the *Lutherans*, and said, that he very agreeably received the Confession which M. de Condom had newly made, *That they meant not to give them the power of putting the Cellar in the Garret, and the Garret in the Cellar*, as he had expressed him-

himself after a very ingenious manner, and that a Return was required to the *Authorizers*, and a Ratification: That he thanked him very heartily for this downright Confession, which in this respect decided the Question, so as he could no longer make use of that *Alf* for the blind obedience, which he pretended. That as to the rest, his accusation against that Synod, for having undertook to change the Confession of the Faith, was null in the sense which *M. de Condom* understood it: For that we ought to distinguish in the Confession, what is Essential, from what is not so. That the Essential consists in those very things, which are called Articles, or Points of Faith, and what is not so, consists in the terms and in the manners of expression. That the Synod might well have consented to a change of the expressions of the Confession, nay, and to the inserting therein of illustrations or explications if it was found useful for the bringing back Spirits that were gone astray, but that it never pretended that any thing should be changed in the essential of that confession, which in this regard remains immutable, for as much as it is Conformable to the *Word of God*.

M. Claude having made an end, *M. de Condom* replied, first of all, that what *M. Claude* had newly said touching the order set down by the Discipline, did not hinder but that the Discipline did order that those who should not acquiesce in the National Synod, should be retrenched, that they did in effect retrench the *Arminians* in the Synod of *Dordrecht*, and he asked *M. Claude* if he did not think that retrenchment just and legitimate? *M. Claude* having made answer, that he thought that what the Synod of *Dordrecht* had done was very just: *M. de Condom* said, that the Church of *Rome* demanded nothing more; that it acknowledged it self obliged to judge according to the *Word of God*, and that was not in question, but the point in issue was only the sense and explication of that Word, and that it belonged to the Church to give that explication, to particular persons to acquiesce therein, and when in case they did not do it, the Church did justly excommunicate. And thus it was that the *Protestants* had been excommunicated in the Council of *Trent*.

Upon the Letter-missive to National Synods is it not, said he, a manifest illusion to swear that they will submit themselves thereunto, supposed or upon condition that what shall be decided therein, shall be conformable to the *Word of God*? there's nothing serious in that: What say you Sir, to this? *M. Claude* said there was no illusion therein, and how he saw nothing but what was regular. If I comprehend your Doctrine aright, replied *M. de Condom*, you believe a private person may doubt of the judgment of the Church even when it pronounces in its highest Tribunal. We believe said *M. Claude*, that there's no certainty of faith that an Ecclesiastical Assembly shall judge rightly, and in that respect one may doubt thereof: But that nevertheless one ought ever to presume well of an Assembly, and in that respect a body ought not to say he doubts it, but must say he hopes, nay and believes it will judge well: For *Jesuw Christ* has promis'd that all those who seek shall find, *Mat. 7.* and that it is to be presumed they will do their duty in seeking well untill the Contrary appears. Wherefore this is an assurance of Charity and of Equity which excludes doubt in some sense. But when people see Cabals, Factions, and humane interests to swarm and reign in Assemblies, then the truth is they may with reason doubt; for we see persons who stray from their Duty, and by consequence are not in a state of hoping any thing from the blessing of God. I beseech you, Sir, said then *M. de Condom*, let us lay aside what is only good to cast dust into the eyes. What you have newly started of Cabals, Factions and Interests, is impertinent and serves only to puzzle. I ask you, suppose there appears in an assembly neither Factions, Cabals nor Interests, and that all its proceedings were just and regular, ought their decisions to be received without examination? No, Sir, said *M. Claude*. I had then reason, said he, to say that all you have urg'd of Factions and Cabals is impertinent. Your conclusion's not just, reply'd *M. Claude*, for tho' there's nothing which staggers the presumption, which people have that this assembly will do its Duty,
and

and according to all appearances things will be orderly therein; this is however but a humane presumption, which offers no certainty of Faith, and by consequence does not hinder examination. But when disorder and corruption are seen to reign therein, the presumption is still no longer in favour of such an Assembly, and instead of entertaining good hopes of it, all is to be feared. Thus it is not without reason that I have spoke of Cabals and of Faction. There M. de Condom taking again in hand the thread of his discourse, said it was not true that the Independants did absolutely reject all sorts of Ecclesiastical Assemblies, for they held one, said he, at London in the Year 1653. so as the Synod of Charenton could not condemn them for that, but only because they would not acknowledge there was owing a Dependence and an absolute submission to the Synods.

As for the Synod of Sainte Foy, added he, if the question had been only to make illustrations and explications, as M. Claude call'd it, what necessity was there of inserting them in the Confession of the Faith? might it not have been done by an Act of Synod, without chewing the confession? Wherefore its certain their design was to express the Article of Faith touching *the Lords Supper*, in ambiguous terms, whereof both parties had agreed, and which each might wrest to his advantage, a thing which had been attempted several times, but had not succeeded. Now this had been in effect not meerly giving illustrations and explications, nor even establishing a Mutual Toleration, but changing the Confession of the Faith. After that, added he, every one may guess what he ought to believe of a Confession of Faith, which a whole National Synod was willing to change. That as for the rest, things were already in such a point between M. Claude and him, that the truth must quickly appear, on the one side or the other. That the Principle which M. Claude maintained was a Principle of *Insupportable pride and presumption*. For is it not the highest arrogance for meer particulars to imagine they have more sense for the understanding of the Scriptures, than a *Whole Ecclesiastical Assembly, than a whole Council*, Which was nevertheless what did necessarily follow from his Opinion, which gave particulars the right and freedom of examining what the Councils have decided, that there was a great deal more *Christian Justice and Humility in submitting ones self absolutely to the judgment of the Church, & pay them absolute obedience, than to pretend to reform its Decisions*.

M. Claude's Turn being to speak, said how 'twas true that their Discipline did mention that after the last and final resolution which should be made by the Word of God in the assembly of a National Synod, those who should refuse to acquiesce should be excommunicated, but that the Discipline did in no wise mean that they were to acquiesce to the authority of the Assembly precisely, but as he had already observed it, to the authority of the Word of God; according to which the Assembly was to square the decision, which still supposes an examination, that thus the excommunication was just upon this supposition that the Word of God had been followed, and not otherwise. That indeed the excommunications of Councils were neither just nor efficacious but when their decisions were grounded upon this Word, and if they were not, their excommunications were unjust, & fell again with full rights upon the head of those who had utter'd them: according to the Maxim of St. Paul, *If we our selves or an Angel from Heaven should preach to you besides what we have preached to you, let him be accursed*. That if the Church of Rome pretended only that, they would not dispute with her, because any one would still have a right & an obligation to examine if the Decisions are conformable or not to the Word of God, and by consequence whether the excommunications are just or unjust. That in this Spirit it was, that the Synod of Dordrecht had condemned, not the persons against whom they did not pronounce any *Anathema*, but the errors, by shewing them contrary to the express Texts of Scripture. That for his own part he held that excommunication very legitimate, but 'twas because he saw it grounded upon the Scripture, and not upon the authority of the Assembly.

That the Independants had in truth held an extraordinary Assembly in 1653: to draw up their Confession of Faith but this did not hinder but that commonly they

they rejected the use of Colloquies and Synods; and for that reason was it the Synod of *Charenton* had condemned them, and not for their not having rendered to Assemblies a blind and absolute obedience in matter of Faith, as appears by the very Act.

As to the Synod of *Sainte Foy*, I know not, said he, My Lord, why you will needs have it there was a design to change the Confession of the Faith, in what it has essential, for this is in no wise in the power of National Synods, and if that of *Sainte Foy* had undertaken it, it had been disown'd by all the Protestants of the Kingdom. I own they might put Illustrations and Explications in an Act, but you must also own to me that they could do it in the confession, and when a thing may be done by several ways, People are at liberty to chuse that which seems the most proper. There *M. de Condom* interrupting *M. Claude*, said, how it was certain this Synod was contriving how to couch the Article of the Lords Supper in ambiguous terms, and that it was the design of the Mediators, that there was mention made of deciding every point of doctrine which did manifestly regard the reality which the *Lutherans* held. *M. Claude* made answer, that to impute to the Synod a design of agreeing upon ambiguous terms, was one of the conjectures of *M. de Condom*, whereof he had not any proof, and for his part he conjectur'd otherwise, that he did not doubt but the design of the Synod was to do what was possible to bring the *Lutherans* to a full knowledge of the truth, and this was that which signified that full power of deciding with them every point of Doctrine, namely by the Word of God.

Then falling again to the thread of his discourse he made answer to what *M. de Condom* had said, that it was an insupportable pride for meer particulars to believe they have more sense for the understanding of the Scripture, than a whole Ecclesiastical Assembly; whereupon he said, that indeed meer particulars ought not to presume so much of themselves as to believe they have more sense for the understanding of the Scriptures than a whole Assembly; that on the contrary People ought to presume well of an Assembly, and have docility for it. But that this did not hinder but that they ought nevertheless to have their eyes open to see if indeed an Assembly had done its Duty after the example of the *Bereans*, of whom it is said, that they conferred what *St. Paul* told them with the Scriptures to know if it was so; that we ought to distinguish a judgment of Charity and of Humility, which only fram'd a probable conclusion, from a persuasion of infallibility, which fram'd a necessary conclusion, that out of this judgment of Charity and of Humility we ought to presume in favour of an Assembly, and even of a particular Doctor, but that because as well Assemblies as particular persons are subject to error, we ought not to push on this judgment of Charity and Humility, even to the blinding ones self, when that indeed an Assembly or a Doctor had err'd, and that this would be pushing things beyond their just bounds; for example, said he, being what I am in my flock, People are obliged to pre-judge in my favour, that I understand better the sense of the Scripture than meer private persons, but they ought not nevertheless to think me infallible; nor imagine it can never happen to me to be deceived in point of Doctrine; in which case certain it is that a meer private person would have a right to believe he might understand the sense of the Scripture, better than me. The business in dispute, said then *M. de Condom*, is not about particular Doctors, we know particular Doctors may err, and by consequence, we ought not to have for them an absolute obedience, but we talk of a whole body of Ecclesiastical Assemblies, and I require of you a clear answer upon this point, whether you believe meer particular persons may understand the sense of the Scripture better than a whole Body of the Church assembled in Council?

M. Claude made answer, that he had spoke of particular Doctors only to shew that humility ought not to be abused, nor under a pretence of shunning pride and presumption, make men blind themselves; for if there be not an absolute obedience

dience owing to particular Doctors, as *M. de Condom* did aver it, there is then neither pride nor presumption in believing it may so happen that one may understand the sense of the Scripture better than them, tho' people are obliged to presume Charitably & probably that this will not happen. That it was the same thing in regard of the Assemblies which not being of themselves infallible, ought not to pretend to have an absolute obedience paid them, being a thing which is only owing to God, that *St. Paul* himself had said *there was no dominion over the Faith of the Corinthians*.

M. de Condom said this passage was all alleged and ask'd *M. Claude* if he did not think an absolute Obedience was owing to *Saint Paul*. *M. Claude* made answer that an absolute Obedience was owing to things divine which *Saint Paul* taught, and not to his person, neither is it said *M. de Condom* to the persons who compose the Councils we pretend that Obedience to be paid, but to the Holy Spirit which conducts 'em, according to what the Council of *Jerusalem* said, *it has pleas'd the Holy Spirit and us*. When the Holy Spirit, said *M. Claude* appears in the Decisions of the Councils as it appeared in the Doctrine of *Saint Paul*, and in that of the Council of *Jerusalem*, we ought to render them that Obedience, and not otherwise. Now it appears therein when their decisions are framed according to the Word of God, *M. de Condom* insisted there was no question about the Word of God, but about the true sense thereof. *M. Claude* said this distinction was of no use, for the true sense of the Word of God, and the Word of God are but one and the same thing.

There *M. de Condom* return'd to the Independants, and said, that upon the principle of *M. Claude* there was no way to avoid *Independantisme*, nor prevent the being as many Religions as Parishes, as many Religions as heads. That the Independants did not reject the Assemblies, for instructions, but that they would not allow the Assemblies should decide by authority, and that the pretended reformed were conformable to them. He repeated over and over the same thing a pretty while, to which *M. Claude* reparteed what he had already answered that in truth there was no humane means certain and infallible to hinder the errors of the wit of man, but that there was one divine and infallible, which was the Holy Spirit which God communicated to his true Believers and that the Synods and other Assemblies were useful means, and proper for that purpose, and that the Independants had only been condemned, because they rejected these last, and not because they would not allow the Assemblies should decide with *supreme and absolute authority*, that tho' the Protestants did not allow Assemblies a sovereign and unlimited authority, they allowed them however all the authority that Ministers and the Dispensers of the Word of God can have.

This would be disputing everlastingly said then *M. de Condom*, I ask you once again, Sir, if you believe meer particular Persons can understand the sense of the Word of God better than the whole Church Assembled in a Council. *M. Claude* said he had already answered him to that, viz. that it did not commonly so happen, nay and that People were obliged to hope better from the Ecclesiastical Assembly, but that it might nevertheless happen that humane passions and worldly interests prevailing in an Assembly, the Decisions would not be squared therein according to the truth. There's no having recourse, said *M. de Condom* to humane passions, nor to worldly interests, you must answer in a word to the question and say yes, or no. Humane passions and worldly interests, said *M. Claude*, are very reasonably urg'd upon this subject, for those are the principal causes of erroneous Decisions, but since you will not allow 'em to be spoken of to you, I'll answer you by distinguishing and saying, that God does not allow that this ordinarily happens, but that in absolutely speaking it may happen. *M. de Condom* said he demanded but that, and how 'twas the greatest of all absurdities to believe it may come to pass a meer particular person may better understand the sense of the Scripture better than a whole Church Assembled in Council.

M. *Claude* made answer, how he wondered he should tax us of so great an absurdity, what was but an effect of the freedom of God in the dispensation of his Grace. That if the point was concerning humane Lights, there would be absurdity in saying that a meer particular person, had more understanding than a whole Assembly; and that this would be a principle of pride and presumption. But tho' the thing in issue, was the Lights of the Holy Spirit which breathes where it pleases, and which God may possibly not give to a whole Assembly, when he shall give it to meer particular persons, that this same thing had effectually happened in the time of *Jesus Christ* according to what he himself had said in *Mat.* *I give thee thanks, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, for that thou hast concealed those things from the Wise and Understanding, and hast revealed them to the little.* That the whole *Judaick Church* had determined in its Assemblies that *Jesus Christ* was an impostour. That it was nevertheless not only a Church, but the only Church in the world, invested with all the authority of God, who had founded, nourished and brought it up untill that time, that God had instructed it by his Apostles, had made it the depositary of his Oracles. That with a just Title it gloried in a succession of two thousand years, that its Assemblies were in the former; and *Jesus Christ* Himself own'd it, *they are seated, said he, in the Chair of Moses, all the things they shall bid you keep, keep them and do them.* That nevertheless this Church had determined the most Capital and most Criminal of all Errors, which was to reject *Jesus Christ* as a wretched person and an impostour that then it must necessarily have been said, that meer particular persons might better understand the sense of the Scripture, than the whole Body of the Church Assembled, and that if the principle of M. *de Condom* was true, namely, that one must have an absolute submission for the Decisions of Ecclesiastical Assemblies without attributing to ones self the right of examining 'em, it would be to condemn *Jesus Christ*, and all those who should believe in him. For according to this Principle *Jesus Christ* ought not to address himself to the People after the Decisions of the Church which were contrary to him, neither ought the People to have given ear to him, since they were no longer allow'd to examine what had been decided, nevertheless, added he, I. C. did not forbear preaching to the People, and converting several, the People also listened to his motion notwithstanding the Decisions that were against him, for whence it follows that this principle of Blind Obedience is bad, and contrary to the conduct of I. C. and that of his discipline.

That 'twould be to no purpose to urge that I. C. made use of miracles by which he prov'd his Authority Divine; for there are two sorts of miracles, the one true, the other false, the one for lying the other for truth. God Himself has made this distinction in the third Chap. of *Deut.* Where he lays to the *Israelites*, *that if a Prophet does miracles and turns them afterwards to other Gods, they ought not to listen to him because it is God who tryes them.* I. C. himself had acknowledged the truth of this distinction. If then, said he, the Principle of M. *de Condom* had held good, it could not have been in the People to have made that judgment after the Church had decided *Jesus Christ*, performed his miracles not by the vertue of God but by that of *Belezzab*, they might not after that, according to M. *de Condom*, opened their eyes to see those miracles or receive the least impression of them, from whence it follows that this principle is false, and destructive to the Christian Religion.

M. *de Condom* interrupted M. *Claude* upon this, and said, that there was no doing of this example of the *Judaick Church* for said he, the Synagogue was to fall, the Prophets had so foretold it, and the people ought not by consequence pay it such an obedience as ought to be paid to the Church of *Jesus Christ* which is never to fall. To which M. *Claude* reparted, that since the Synagogue was to fall, it might so happen that meer particular persons understood better the sense of the Scripture than a whole Body of the Church in its Assemblies, which

which was the point in issue, and how from thence it plainly followed, 'twas neither pride nor presumption in particular persons to be beleived it might so befall 'em as to unde rstand the Scripture better than a whole Body of Assembly, or to examine its decisions upon this Principle. That he required nothing more.

Besides this Reason, said he could not have any effect upon the Jewish People because that not only the Synagogue were not agreed upon the point, but on the contrary maintaining that it was never to fall, and produced in favour of its self promises which at first push seemed extremely strong: To alledge upon this the prophets who foretold its fall, would be nothing to the purpose, for the business in Dispute is the sense of those Prophecies, and the Synagogue explaining them in a sense which was favourable to it, 'twas the People's duty, according to the principle of M. de Condom to stick to that explanation without examining it; in short said he, this fall of the Synagogue makes not any difference between its Assemblies and those of the Christian Church for the Question in dispute, for what promises swever of Perpetual subsistence the Church of Jesus Christ has, there is nothing in Scripture which assures us the Assemblies of Councils shall not fall.

There M. de Condom taking up the Discourse said, how what M. Claude started of the time of the fall of the Synagogue was of all thing in the world the most unseasonable, for then there would not be said that there was no visible authority upon Earth, wherein people ought necessarily to acquiesce, since I. C. himself was there that is to say, the truth it self appeared visibly among men, to whom God had remitted Testimony from Heaven, and who performed miracles. D'you, added he, but bring us back, I. C. teaching, preaching, working of miracles, and we shall have no more need of the Authority of the Church. What I have urg'd, said M. Claude, is not only the thing in the world the most part, but the plainest and most concluding, and I hope you your self will agree to 'em when I shall have desired you to consider how the visible Authority of the Son of God, was then the point in question between the Synagogue and I. C. how it was this point which the Synagogue had decided in the negative, that the business was to know if I. C. was an Impostor, or not, if his miracles were from God or from Beelzebub, that the visible Authority of I. C. could not decide the question in the Spirit of the People; for an Authority does decide nothing untill first of all it be received, and that of I. C. was not so yet, since the Dispute was about receiving, or rejecting it: thus there only remain'd the authority of the Church which had decided against him, from whence it follows, that according to the principle of M. de Condom particular persons ought to have back to that and receive Jesus Christ. M. de Condom called this argument of M. Claude a Jewish argument. M. Claude replied that it was not his argument, he ought to call Jewish argument since it concluded in favour of Christianity, but that it was the contrary principle which he ought to call by that name, since it favored the cause of the Jews.

After this M. Claude said that if he would have recourse to History it would be no difficult matter for him to show how several Councils fell, and have decided the errors as amongst others the Council of Arimini which condemned the Consubstantiation of the Son, that is to say *Plu Eternal Divinity*, M. de Condom cryed out, whither d'you hurry us to the Council of Arimini, when shall we have done if we must discuss all those histories? D'you not know that the Council of Arimini was an Assembly of robbers, that my Lord said M. Claude, is just what I would say, that a General Council may become an Assembly of robbers, now here's one composed of four hundred Bishops, what is become of it, M. de Condom said that the Bishops had been forced by the Authority of the Emperor, who had sent Souldiers thither; but that afterwards being return'd every one to his home they had disown'd what they had done, and had shewn repentance for it, M. Claude replied that in truth several of them had acknowledged their fault, but that this very Act of their acknowledging it and repenting it, as M. de Condom does affirm, confirms this truth, that they had committed it and there's no need of

of knowing out of what principle they had committed it, since they had committed it in reality; that their Recantation also shewed that each of them in particular thought not himself obliged to acquiesce in what they had determined all together in Council.

M. de Condom cryed out, 'twas not necessary to enter into all those points of history which would lead 'em too far. The thing, said he, may more easily be decided: the Dispute is concerning the first principle of the Faith of particular persons, which you believe to be the Holy writ, and we the authority of the Church. I suppose a Child that has been baptized, and has not yet read the Scripture, and I ask you by what principle that Child believes the Scripture to be Divine, that the Book of Canticles, for Example, where there's not a Word spoke of God is divine. Either that Child that's a Christian, who has received the Holy Spirit and the Faith infused by Baptism and is a member of the Church, doubts of the Divinity of the Scripture, or does not doubt of it, if not he believes it then Divine by the Authority of the Catholick Church, which is the first Authority under which he lives; if he doubts of it, a Christian may then doubt of the truth of the Scripture.

M. Claude made answer that he might have something to say upon M. de Condoms supposing that every child baptized, received the Holy Spirit, but that he would not insist upon what is spoken by the by, nor deviate from the principal subject in question, wherefore he'd be contented with making some reflections upon what M. de Condom had just urg'd. The first said he shall be that probably the first knowledge which the Holy Spirit gives to the Child of the Catholick Church, is by his Creed, wherein he says, *Credo Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam*. Never theless in the Creed this Article is posterior to the Articles of Doctrine since it begins with God the Father Almighty, and continues with Jesus Christ and with the Holy Ghost after which comes the Catholick Church. Now it appears clearly from thence that Faith of the Doctrine does not depend on the Authority of the Church, for otherwise the symbole must have been compos'd after another manner, and say at first, *I believe the Catholick Church, and by the Catholick Church I believe in God the Father, &c.*

My second Reflection, said he, is that you cannot suppose as you do, that the first authority under which the Child begins to live is that of the Catholick Church, for certain it is that the first Authority under which a Child lives is that of his Father, or that of his Mother, or if you will that of his nurse, and how that of the Church can only come afterwards, and in some sort by dependance on the other. Now from thence it follows that the first Authority which is the Paterna may as well conduct the Child to the Scripture as to the Church.

In the third place, said he, there is nothing more easy then to return your argument against your self: Either the Child Baptized doubts of the Authority of the Church or does not doubt of it, if he does not doubt of it, he believes it then by the authority of the Scripture, for he cannot by any other way believe it of Divine Faith, and by consequence it is not the Church which makes us believe Scripture, but it is the Scripture which makes believe the Church, which is that we aim at. If he doubts of it, see here then a Christian who has received the Holy Spirit and Faith infused by Baptisme, and who is a member of the Church who can doubt of the first authority, on which depends the rest of the Faith. That the Child cannot believe of Divine Faith the Authority of the Church but by that of the Scripture, I prove it, for if it is not by the Scripture that he believes the Church and its authority it is then either by way of inspiration and enthusiasm, or by the Authority of his Father, of his Mother, or of his nurse, or by argument drawn out of the very Nature of the Church. It cannot be out of enthusiasm for the Holy Spirit does not act in that manner. Neither can it be by the Authority of the Father, or the Mother, or Nurse, for you see this would be to establish those sorts of authorities for the first principle of Faith, neither can

it be by proof and arguments drawn out of the very nature of the Church; for as in your argument you suppose the Child has not yet read the Scripture, I suppose also in mine that he has not yet *Meditated upon the Nature of the Catholick Church*, and knows only its name. It then remains that the Child believes the Catholick Church by Scripture, which is, what you do not allow off, or does not beleive it at all, and that he doubts it, which is the same inconvenience you would have thrown me in, in regard of the Scripture.

Here a body may say with truth, that *M. de Condom* *Was not in its usual state, and how that freedom which is natural to it was sensibly diminish'd*. He undertook to maintain that the first Authority under which a Child lived in respect of Religion was that of the Catholick Church, and not that of the Father or Mother. *M. Claude* replied, that there was no denying a thing so clear as that, that the first Authority in respect of Religion, is that of the Father or Mother, who took the first care of the Education of the Child, or that it was from them that the Child learnt the first time that there was a Catholick Church, to which he ought to range himself, or that there was a Scripture which was Divine, and to which he ought to submit himself. Now the point being to know by what means the child might believe the Authority of the Catholick Church, he had only to chuse either the way of *Enthusiasm*, or that of the *Paternal Authority*, or that of the Scripture, which might instruct him. *M. de Condom* replied, the faith of the child in the Authority of the Church was divine, because 'twas the Holy Spirit that formed it in him. *M. Claude* reply'd that the thing in debate was not the cause efficient which produced that Faith in the child, but the argument by which it was produced; that if *M. de Condom* understood that the Holy Ghost produced it in the child, without proof and without argument it would be a kind of *Enthusiasm*, and yet the Holy Ghost did not act in that manner. *M. de Condom* said, that in effect there were *Motives of credibility*; to which *M. Claude* replied, that if he gave the child time to examine the *Motives of credibility* by the Authority of the Church, and to perceive the force of 'em, he also would give the same child the time to examine the *Motives of credibility* for the Authority of the Scripture, and to perceive the force of them; and this being so, he must renounce his argument, which suppos'd the child as not yet having read the Scripture.

But is it not true, said *M. de Condom*, that in this state either the child doubts or does not doubt of the Divinity of the Scriptures? But said *M. Claude*, is it not true that in that state either the child doubts or does not doubt of the authority of the Church? for if you suppose the child before his having read the Scripture, I suppose him also before his having read the *Motives of credibility* for the authority of the Church. You are obliged to answer to my argument, and the same answer you shall make me, I shall make you; you may take what course you please, but i'll be sure to answer you directly to your reasoning: now the child must be distinguish'd in three times; before his father has shew'd him the Bible, and told him that this Book is Divine, after his Father has told him so, without his having yet read it himself, after he has read it himself. At the first time, which is that wherein you consider him in your argument, there's no saying he doubts, or does not doubt, for neither the one nor the other is true in the sense you understand it. Not to doubt of a thing signifies to be assured of it. Now before a body can say, either that one doubts, or is assured of the Quality of a thing, one must know the thing it self. I do not doubt nor am I assured that such a person is the King of Spain until first I have had some knowledge of the Person. Wherefore your argument is not just, either the child doubts or does not doubt of the divinity of the Scripture, there's a *Medium*, namely which is called an *ignorance of pure negation*. He knows not yet what Scripture is, never having heard talk of it. To doubt or not to doubt of the divinity of the Scripture, a man must have some knowledge of it, and frame to himself some idea at least of it. But the child does not frame to it any idea of a Book, whereof he never heard any mention; in the second time when his

Father has shewed him the Bible, and told him this *Book is the word of God*, yet without his having yet read it himself, He believes it *the Word of God*: He believes it the *Word of God*, not of *Divine Faith*, but of *Humane Faith*, because his Father told him so, which is a state of *Catechumene*. In the third time when he has read himself this Book, and perceives the *Efficaciousness* of it, he believes it *the Word of God* no longer by *Humane Faith*, because his Father has told him so, but by *Divine Faith*, because he himself has immediately perceived the *Divinity* of it, and it is the *state of the faithful*.

M. de Condom fastned upon this word *Catechumene* and said that the child was a Christian, was baptized, and was in the *Alliance of God*. M. Claude made answer, that by the word *Catechumene* he meant only, the child baptized, in the state he received the first instructions. M. de Condom repeated again much the same things he had said, still affirming 'twas by the *authority of the Church* that the child received the *Scriptures as Divine*, and after having received them from the Church as Divine, he received also from the Church their sense and interpretation.

Tell me, I beseech your Lordship, said then M. Claude, When a Child learns the first time, there is a Catholick Church, is it simply a general Idea, which only consists in knowing there is a Catholick Church, without knowing where it is, or what it is: Or does it determine that Church, whose Assemblies it sees? For if it be the first, it is a principle of Faith very insignificant, very useless, which you establish. I know there is a Catholick Church to whose authority People ought to submit themselves, but I know not where it is, or what it is, this would be a strange principle of Faith. True, said M. de Condom, the Child determines this Idea so that Church particularly whose Assemblies it sees or assists at it self, and believes it to be the Catholick Church, and not simply there is one. Let us then suppose, said M. Claude, a child born in a *Heretick* or *Schismatick* Church, in the *Ethiopian* Church for example, the first principle of Faith this child will entertain, will be that of the *Ethiopian* Church, as being the *Catholick*. It will be from it, and according to its authority, that he will receive the Scripture as *Divine*, from it he will be he will receive the sense & explication of that Scripture, and he can never believe he has a right to examine the Decisions of his *Ethiopian* Church, for fear of falling into the inconvenience of imagining he may better understand the sense of the Scripture, he a meer particular person, than the whole Body of the Church. Tell me, My Lord, Whether by this principle the child will not always remain in that *Heretick* and *Schismatick* Church? Tell me by what way you pretend to free him out of it. Certain then it is, your Principle is equally proper to maintain the *Jew in Judaism*, the *Pagan in Paganism*, the *Heretick in Heresy*, as the *Orthodox in the true Church*.

M. de Condom replied to this, that one was to distinguish in the persuasion of the *Ethiopian* child what came from the *Holy Ghost*, from what came by humane prepossession; that 'twas the *Holy Ghost* which dictated to him in general there was a Catholick Church in what place soever it was, but that this Catholick Church was that where he was born, this came from humane prepossession. That in truth he received the Scripture from the hand of that Church, and did not believe it Divine but by its authority, but afterwards by reading the Scripture, the *Holy Spirit* produced in him doubts against the Church of his Birth, and from that means freed him from the Heresy, and the Schism wherein he was engaged.

M. Claude made answer, that either M. de Condom must renounce his principle, or own the impossibility of what he urg'd. For since this *Ethiopian* in dispute cannot nor ought not to understand the Scripture, but in the sense of the Church, by the authority of which he believes it Divine, and from whose hand he receives its interpretation, it is impossible that by reading the Scripture there should arise any doubts in his mind, contrary to the truth of his Church; for he only explains that Scripture conformably to the sense of that Church. But if on the contrary,

you mean this man should explain of himself the Scripture, and takes it in another sense than his Church does, you make him, said he, renounce your principle, for which you have hitherto combated, and you not only make him renounce it, but you establish that it is the Holy Spirit himself which makes him renounce it, and all the inconveniences which you have so exaggerated, vanish into smoke; he added, that what M. de Condom had just said, justified the proceedings of the Protestants in respect of the Roman Church, for tho' it were it which we ought to have believed from our birth to have been the Catholick Church, tho' it were by it and its authority that we should have received the Scripture as divine, we cannot be blamed for having distinguish'd in that Belief, what was of the Holy Spirit, from what proceeded from human prepossession, *We cannot be blamed for having in reading the Scripture, received doubts contrary to the truth of that Church, and for having freed our selves by that means from out of its communion.*

M. de Condom said, there was this difference, that the *Ethiopian* withdrawing from out his Church, would joyn himself to the Catholick, whereas the pretended reformed have not joyned themselves to any communion, you fought strongly after that, said he, of *Jeremy* the Patriarch of *Constantinople*, but he would have nothing to do with you. We did not separate of our selves, said M. Claude; and this is sufficient to say that we did not separate our selves from the true Church, *M. Jeremy* the Patriarch of *Constantinople*, would not accept of us as you say, it is to his own, he did not what he ought.

Upon this the Company got up, and the Conversation, which continued still some time, became much more confused. There was spoken therein of diverse things. M. de Condom compared with a great deal of exaggeration, the separation of the Protestants to that of the ancient Hereticks, to that of the *Arians*, and to that of the *Maccedonians*, who had made new Churches. M. Claude compared the conduct of the Protestants to that of the Apostles of I. C. when they were separated from the Jews, and said that as the Apostles supported themselves upon the Scripture against the Jews, who supported themselves upon the authority of *Ecclesiastical Assemblies*, the Protestants did the like against the Church of Rome. He said the *Arians* maintained that the consubstantiality of the Son of God, decided by the Council of *Nice*, was a novelty, and indeed several persons before the *Arians* had spoken imprudently enough of the Divinity of the Son, and amongst others he named *Origen*, *Justin Martyr* and the Council of *Antioch*; as for *Origen*, M. de Condom said, he was a suspected author. As to the Council of *Antioch*, 'twas, said he, a Council of *Arians*. To which M. Claude reply'd, that he was mistaken, that 'twas a Council held before the *Arians*, and that it had rejected the term of consubstantial. As for *Justin Martyr*, he, said M. de Condom, that a Martyr e're spoke ill of the Divinity of the Son of God, I will ne'r believe it. You may believe My Lord, what you please, but the thing is however so, said M. Claude.

M. de Condom fell afterwards upon the Invocation of Saints, and upon the prayer for the dead; of the first said he, M. Daille granted it thirteen hundred years antiquity; and as to the Second, M. Blondel owned it very ancient. M. Claude replied, it was not to be thought strange that the Church of Rome which had scraped up and canonized the errors and superstitions of former ages, should find some that were of a sufficient old date. That he ought to have added how M. Daille had prov'd that for the space of three hundred years there had not been the least trace seen of the Invocation of Saints, but especially that it had not the least foundation in Scripture, that he own'd that the prayer was one of the most ancient superstitions, but how that of the ancients was very different from that of the Church of Rome at this day, and how after all 'twas an error contrary to the principles of the Scripture.

M. de Condom returned again to his comparison of the Protestants with the ancient Hereticks; concluding their novelty and that of their Church. M. Claude made appear this prepossession was full of injustice, and of a dangerous consequence; unjust, because on the one side it gave the cause to the strongest, and to those who have the multitude on their side, contrary

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to what Scripture teaches us, that *We ought not to follow the multitude to do ill*, *Exod. 2. 3.* for the strongest party never fails to accuse the other of making a new body, a new Church: Unjust also, because one may take a false Antiquity for a real Antiquity, an Antiquity of some ages which in effect will be a novelty, for an Antiquity of all ages, which in matter of Religion is the highest injustice; he added how this prepossession was besides of a dangerous consequence, for by these means from the time errors and superstitions shall insensibly be introduced into Religion, and that Custom or the School shall have authorized them, 'twill be no longer possible to oppose them or root them out. Those who maintain will be perpetually saying, that they make a new Church and Religion. Thus the *Pharisees* accused I. C. of being an innovator, under pretence that the Disciples did not observe the tradition of the ancients, which themselves were but innovations; but the *Jews* accused St. Paul of stirring up sedition among them through all the World, and being the head of the *Nazarites*, which they look'd upon as a new Sect. Thus all the Apostles were accused by the *Pagans* of being *Disturbers of the publick repose, and innovators*, under pretence that they would root out of the hearts of men their ancient errors, and reduce them to the adoration of *one false true God Creator of Heaven and of Earth*.

M. de Candem replied that I. C. was not new, that the Messiah was expected by the *Jews*; that *John Baptist*, *Anna* the Prophetess, *Simoon* and the Wise Men had owned him. True he was not new to consider the thing in it self, said M. Claude, for he is yesterday, and to day, and eternally: But he was new to a whole Nation that expected a Temporal Messiah, and perceived not in him any mark of what they expected, he was new in their opinion, in that he condemned the ancient traditions. His Church was new to them, in that it separated it self from the body of the *Jews*, and made a Body apart which they had never seen. And as to *John Baptist*, *Anna* the Prophetess, *Simoon* and the Wise men who owned him, what were those but meer particular persons in comparison of the whole Body of Sacrificers, *Pharisees*, *Doctors of the Law*, and the whole body of the *Jews* in general, who did not acknowledge him, and expected a Terrestrial Messiah; wherefore certain it is prepossession of novelty, which will not allow a body to examine things to the bottom, which does not distinguish between a false and true antiquity, which holds for ancient all that was found out yesterday, and for new all that is contrary to what was found out yesterday, is a bad and dangerous prepossession, which furnishes arms both to *Jews* and *Pagans* against the Christian Religion, and indeed *Cassius* and the other enemies of the Christian Religion failed to make use of them.

I reply, said M. de Candem, that the *Pagans* have imputed the Christians with their novelty, but the Christians have shown them that they always believed the same God whom they adored, and expected the same Messiah. What you said, said M. Claude, confirms my sentiment, which is that one ought not to conclude out of prepossession, because of an apparent novelty, but that you must pry into the bottom of things, to see if the novelty is really so. That reproach of the *Pagans* proceeded from prejudice and prepossession, and the defence of the Christians followed my maxime. For 'twill by the distinction of the persons that the Christians would appear, that they were not new, yet that they were new, and that they were considered as *Pagans*, though it seemed ancient was nevertheless new.

As the Conversation had lasted a long while, near upon five hours, with a great Application on each side, and with a great Attention of the By-standers, the Company began to intermeddle in the Discourse, and the Dispute ended. After which M. Claude addressed himself to M. de Candem, to whom he rendered a great deal of thanks, and brothered him that the diversity of Religions and of sentiments, might not hinder him from granting him his goodwill. That for his part he would ever preserve a perfect respect and esteem for the merits of his Person. M. de Candem answered him very civilly, that he knew him before by his writings, but that he was surprised to find him also by this Conversation, wherein he had seen all that was possible for the maintenance of his cause, and that there should be no occasion offered of serving him, but he would do it with his whole heart.

Presently after M. de Candem withdrew, and M. Claude having thanked the Company and particularly *Madam La Marchesse de Lorge*, for the attention it had shewn him, took Leave of *Mademoiselle de Duras*, to whom he said, that he had desired the acquaintance of her, and that he had nothing more to do than to pray to God for her, and so encourage her to make a good use of what she had heard for the *Confirming her in the Religion wherein God had called her*, without suffering her to be staggered by any temptation, and that he would make his request to God for her. *Mademoiselle de Duras* thanked him very affectionately for the trouble he had taken, and desired him with some emotion of heart to pray to God for her, which M. Claude having promised her to do, he went his way.

The End.